News release

Record-breaking weather

17 July 2006

Forecasters at the Met Office are predicting the highest July temperatures ever recorded this week, with a 30% probability on Wednesday of breaking the all-time UK temperature record.

The highest temperature ever recorded in the UK was 38.5 °C at Faversham in Kent on 10 August 2003. This week, temperatures of 37 °C are expected, however it is possible that the all-time record could be broken as one or two locations in the Home Counties of south-east England reach highs of 39 °C (102 °F).

What caused the heatwave?
The reason for the heatwave is a prolonged period of very settled weather, with cloudless skies and strong sunshine which has allowed temperatures to rise. Over the coming days, hotter air will move across from continental Europe, causing the temperature to rise further.

Is global warming a factor?
Research conducted at the Met Office, shows that there is a significant human contribution to these heatwaves because of CO_2 emissions over recent decades. This is a sign of things to come, with the current temperatures becoming a normal event by the middle of this century.

The outlook is for less hot weather to move across the country by the end of the week, although temperatures are expected to remain above average for the rest of the month.

UK record temperatures

	July record			All-time record		
England	36.0 °C	Epsom	22/07/1911	38.5 °C	Faversham	10/08/2003
Wales	33.6 °C	Usk	3/07/1976	35.2 °C	Hawarden Bridge	2/08/1990
Scotland	32.8 °C	Dumfries	2/07/1908	32.9 °C	Greycrook	9/08/2003
Northern Ireland	30.8 °C	Belfast	12/07/1983	30.8 °C 30.8 °C	Knockarevan Belfast	30/06/1976 12/07/1983

Regional maximum temperatures for this week in July

	Predicted max. temperature	Average max. temperature
South-east England	37 °C	21 °C
South-west England	36 °C	23 °C
Midlands	36 °C	22 °C
North-west England	35 °C	20 °C
North-east England	33 °C	21 °C
East Anglia	37 °C	22 °C
Wales	34 °C	21 °C
Scotland	31 °C	19 °C
Northern Ireland	30 °C	19 °C

Latest forecast for the UK

Met Office Heat-Health watch

UK regional five-day UV index forecast

Advice during periods of heat and sun

Latest UK observations

Heatwave warning (NHS Direct)

What to do in case of a heatwave (Department of Health)

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